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HOUSEKEEPERS' CHAT

Wednesday, December 30, 1931.

(NOT FOR PUBLICATION)

Subject: "Dinner on New Years' Day." Information from the Bureau of Home Economics, U.S.D.A.

Bulletins available: Series of meat leaflets: "Lamb As You Like It," "Cooking Beef According to the Cut," "Pork in Preferred Ways," and "Cooking Cured Pork."

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When it comes to holiday meal planning, tradition often helps make the menu. There's plenty of tradition for the Thanksgiving feast. There's tradition which suggests what to eat on Christmas day. There's even tradition up in New England that makes salmon and peas the proper thing for the Fourth of July. But New Years' Day is different. Most of the familiar holiday foods are served this day. But there is very little custom that suggests any definite New Years' day manu, any special food for this first day of the year. In fact New Years' dinner usually is an individual affair, made up as suits the hostess' taste in the matter. Generally it features a roast stuffed fowl of some sort and a mince pie or fruit case for dessert. But whether you serve a duck or a goose or a chicken depends on what you and your family and your pocketbook have to say on the matter, rather than on tradition. Then those familiar holiday desserts mince pie and fruit cake are often served along with candy, raisins and nuts.

Since there aren't any hard and fast rules to go by for this feast, I've decided not to give you a definite menu. But instead I'll make some suggestions--in fact, a good many suggestions which you can jot down in your notebook as we talk. And when we're through talking, you can choose for yourself the ones that appeal to you most.

First, let's get a picture of what an ideal dinner of this sort ought to be. Whether it's a family meal or a guest meal, it needs to be well-balanced and to contain plenty of variety and interest, and not too much of any one sort of food--not too many rich foods, not too much sweet or starch or meat or gravy. Well-planned modern methods are generous with vegetables and fruits, some of them raw, and at least one of the vegetables of the green variety, preferably the green leafy kind.

If the dish of honor, as it frequently happens is a stuffed fowl-- Oh, that reminds me. What a sermon I could preach on the subject of stuffings. I have a good many ideas on that subject, some quite violent ones. But I'll



restrain myself today and say, as gently as possible, that in my opinion, many people are unwise when it comes to stuffings. No stuffing should be heavy or soggy or greasy. The Recipe Lady, in fact, goes even further. She says to her mind no stuffing should be moist. So you'll have to select your favorite kind of stuffing--only make it with reliable directions. There are several excellent recipes in the radio cookbook. Whichever kind you choose--whether it's mashed potato or rice or bread stuffing--it can take the place of potatoes in the menu. Some authorities on menu making would insist sternly on no potatoes at all even when stuffing is served. But the Menu Specialist, who is more tactful, suggests that we discourage serving more than one kind of starch vegetable along with stuffing. So you might have sweet potatoes or white potatoes or corn.

One thing sure about this meal, you'll want some green vegetable. Suit yourself as to what it is--Chinese cabbage or the plain green kind, broccoli, spinach, mixed green or string beans or any of the others. The point is to have it green.

As for the raw fruit or vegetable, you can usually work that in with the salad or the appetizer. On a very cold day it's cheerful to start the day off with hot clear soup. But at any other time, a fruit or vegetable appetizer looks tempting--in fact, can be a real help in the decoration of the meal-- and stimulates an appetite at the very start. An appetizer, whether it's one of the popular tomato juice cocktails or the chilled cup of diced fruit or tiny glasses of fruit juice, should be tart in flavor, and dainty and attractive in appearance.

Variety and contrast play a big part in making the meal a success from first to last. Contrast in color and in flavor and in texture. A plate of cauliflower, creamed celery and mashed potatoes, for example, looks and tastes uninteresting because there is too much sameness to it. But serve creamed potatoes with buttered green peas, stuffed tomatoes and crisp, fresh celery and notice what a difference the variety and contrast make.

Let's consider now what to have for the main course of the New Years' meal. If you want a fowl to help celebrate at this first dinner of the New Year, there's roast goose with chestnut stuffing, for the main course. Or roast duck with raisin and apple stuffing. Or roast chicken with oyster stuffing. Brown giblet gravy makes any of these stuffings extra good.

Or how would you like a stuffed roast of meat instead of a fowl? There's that baked shoulder of lamb with mint or watercress stuffing that I've mentioned before. A fine recipe for it is in the lamb leaflet. Did I hear somebody asking for the name and number of that leaflet? Its number is 28; it's name is "Lamb As You Like It;" and it's to be had for the asking. If you haven't a copy, Clementine, better start the new year right and send for one. If you'd like to give yourself some other useful new years' presents, send for the other meat leaflets that go along with this one. There are leaflets on cooking beef, pork, fresh and cured, and rabbit. All of these booklets contain recipes useful both for special and everyday meals.

In the fresh pork leaflet, there's a recipe for one of these stuffed roasts that would also be suitable for Friday's dinner--baked stuffed shoulder of fresh pork with savory stuffing. Remember, the directions for baked fresh ham with apricot stuffing. That I gave you in a chat not long ago-- There's another suggestion for this dinner.



Many of the suitable cuts of meat for this dinner, however, are not stuffed. Short ribs of beef roasted with browned potatoes--what would make a better main dish than that? And so inexpensive too. Or, if you'd rather have pork, how about a loin roast of pork served with nice red baked apples? And what could be more handsome or more delicious than a crown rib roast of lamb filled with Duchess potatoes?

For the smaller family, the Menu Specialist suggest a slice of ham baked with pineapple. I don't have to tell you where to find that recipe, do I? Yes, it's right up there on your shelf in the new cured pork leaflet, the one you received about a month or so ago. Yes, that's the leaflet. It's title is "Cooking Cured Pork." Now, if you'll open it to page five, you'll see a picture of the baked ham and pineapple and the recipe just under the picture.

For something a bit different, there's a casserole of rabbit for the main dish; ~~that~~ will suit either a large or a small family. This time page the rabbit leaflet please. Father's gone a hunting or a--marketing and Baby Bunting wants some rabbit casserole.

I've had a request for a recipe for giblet gravy and I've just about time today to give you the short directions for making it. These directions are meant for Turkey giblet gravy but will do for other holiday birds. Simmer the giblets-- and, as you know, the giblets of the fowl are the liver and the gizzard-- well, simmer these in one quart of water until they are tender. Then drain and chop them fine, but save the water in which they were cooked. With 1/2 cup of the dripping in the roaster, blend 6 tablespoons of flour. Now add the liquid in which the giblets were cooked and enough more hot water to make a thin gravy. Cook for 5 minutes. Then add the chopped giblets. Season with salt and pepper and serve with the roast fowl.

Tomorrow: "Ending the Year with Good Cheer."

